

STATE

MAGAZINE

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May 2014

Picturing Disability

Art Programs in Seoul
Challenge Preconceptions

Lost in Mexico

ACS Tijuana's Efforts
Help Reunite Family

TOKYO

Embassy Sustains Vital Partnership
in World's Largest Metropolis



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Photo by Sharon Ketchum



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On The Cover

Seen through a break in the surrounding evergreens, the Imperial Palace overlooks a massive green space in the bustling heart of Tokyo.

Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco

Post One

BY ISAAC D. PACHECO

Envisioning Art

Photography was once the realm of professionals and rich amateurs, but the emergence of inexpensive digital technology over the past two decades has helped lower the threshold for participation in this once-exclusive medium. Digital photography has made it easier to share one's vision with the world, and the use of digital imagery online has helped define new types of social interaction and participatory culture.

In this technological era where a computer chip creates an image from a compilation of electronic data, the precise definition of photography as a medium has become less clear. What remains clear is that for all of digital photography's innovations, it has not replaced the photographer's vision or, more correctly, his or her ability to mentally visualize a scene.

Today's camera technologies can automatically select flash levels that fill harsh shadows or overpowering light sources. The cameras can ensure that dominant elements of the frame are in focus, and can even meter scenes with advanced light sensors that create well-balanced exposures. What none of these technologies can or will ever be able to do is replace the human imagination. It is an artist's synergistic interaction with the technology, medium and environment that dictates the final output.

A recent photo exhibition sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, in collaboration with the University of California, Riverside's California Museum of Photography, highlighted the importance of the photographer's vision in a unique and paradoxical way.



State Magazine Editor Isaac D. Pacheco snaps a shot with a telephoto lens while on assignment in Japan for this month's cover story on the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo.

Photo by William Ng

The exhibit showcased the work of more than 100 photographers who are blind or have limited sight, dispelling the notion that sight is a prerequisite for participating in a predominantly visual medium. The artists' work also demonstrated that the term "vision" is anything but literal, and refers instead to the conceptual process that draws on all of the artist's senses.

In describing how a photographer realizes his or her vision, Ansel Adams once wrote that "The negative is the score, the print is the performance." Artists in the "Sight Unseen" exhibition relied on senses other than sight to guide their creativity and translate their mental "negatives" into visual performances that audiences could appreciate. Their work confirmed that photography is a truly democratic art form, and that disability does not limit an individual's imagination or capacity for creative expression. Be sure to check out the full story about Embassy Seoul's innovative arts outreach on page 14. □

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The Blackwater River spills over a 62-foot (19 m) cascade at Blackwater Falls State Park in the Allegheny Mountains of West Virginia. The site is a popular destination for tourists visiting the state's scenic Canaan Valley.

Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco

In the News



Online program brings classroom to students

Using an Internet-based training product called AvayaLive Engage, FSI's School of Applied Information Technology (SAIT) is training IT professionals by providing an instructor-led, real-time learning environment. Now, students need not travel; they can take such classes as CompTIA Security+ on a home computer connected to the Internet or on a post's Dedicated Internet Network. AvayaLive Engage combines the best features of a traditional classroom with an avatar-based online learning experience.

Using AvayaLive's Web collaboration tool, students and instructors participate in real-time training, including virtual labs. Instructors can tailor their hours to coincide with the operating hours of a post. When students finish the course, they receive the same FSI accreditation they would receive from a physical-classroom-based course. A recent AvayaLive CompTIA Security + class included students supporting 12 missions in Europe and Africa.

AvayaLive is based on video-gaming principles and uses a movable avatar representing the student. To start a course, students log in to the program and create an avatar that can be personalized by changing clothing, hair and facial contours. They next complete a short orientation session with the instructors. A reference guide on the wall in the course's "main foyer" helps participants locate the designated lecture area.

The course has a virtual "main lecture area" and virtual images of seating, a stage with a podium, several screens behind the stage containing cybersecurity articles, a PowerPoint presentation and videos or PDFs. Off to the right are stairs that lead to virtual breakout areas.

Participants can hear those closest to them but not conversations on the other side of the virtual room. A text/chat feature allows instructors and students to use the virtual breakout rooms in small groups to work on projects or discuss a topic associated with that room. In these rooms, students can access files stored in a drop box, brainstorm on a whiteboard or watch online content like YouTube videos. They may participate in real-time collaboration from different countries (though usually in nearby time zones).

Since January, approximately 24 participants from four bureaus' geographic regions have used this virtual classroom. Many gave it high marks, noting similarities with traditional classroom learning, in particular the interactivity and ability to utilize a wealth of online materials in real time. The student feedback helped to adjust the delivery of future classes. SAIT is pursuing plans to offer this training for other Microsoft courses geared for systems administrators.

FSI offers many distance-learning courses, and numerous IT-based classes are available through FSI's Learn Center.

Baghdad Opens First Embassy Souk



Embassy Baghdad employees enjoy the new souk.

Photo by Johanna Klees

On Feb. 15, the first permanent “souk,” an open-air market popular in the Arab world, opened on the grounds of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. The souk will be open seven days a week for embassy employees to purchase a range of Iraqi goods, from traditional carpets to household electronics and art.

The idea for the souk originated last year with Deputy Facilities Manager Ray Meininger. He cited the closure of nearby properties and security restrictions that prohibit shopping outside the embassy compound. He said the American Embassy Baghdad Employee Association (AEBEA) wanted a shopping opportunity and cultural learning experience that would also create commerce for Iraqi businesses.

Meininger and fellow AEBEA board members approached local vendors working in the International Zone, many of whom have been selling goods to Americans for years. Vendors were delighted to move into the embassy compound. Based on community needs, the board recruited nine vendors, including a tailor, a cobbler, two artists, an “antiquities” vendor, a carpet store and an electronics shop.

Using his facilities expertise, Meininger spearheaded the construction and design plans for the souk, repurposing portable buildings into small shops for the selected vendors, building a sun shade structure and adding Middle Eastern-style lanterns for atmosphere. Board members coordinated closely with the regional security office over several months to allow access for the vendors and their goods.

The embassy community has been thrilled with the result. “The transformation of the space is fantastic; it is great to have these shops right here on the embassy compound,” said Vice Consul Damon Goforth at the grand opening. The souk’s customers include Foreign Service officers and their partners, Iraqi employees, third-country-national employees and contractors from around the world who are interested in buying goods for their residences here and as gifts for home. Refugee Admissions Coordinator Gillian Appel, who attended the opening with friends, said, “I saw one of our local staff wearing a beautiful scarf and really wanted one. I was so excited that they had them at the souk and bought many of them for my family and friends!”

Calendar Helps Post Build Connections

The U.S. Consulate General in Toronto spearheaded a collaborative project between the Indigenous Visual Studies Program at the Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCAD U) and the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) in Santa Fe, N.M., to create a 2014 calendar with the theme “We Are All Related.”

Toronto’s public affairs section initially contacted the nearby OCAD U to explore having their art students create a calendar on a U.S.-Canada theme. The dean of the School of Arts suggested an indigenous theme, given the importance of indigenous cultures and people to both countries, and the post reached out to IAIA, where the idea was also warmly received.

The calendar’s theme, a Lakota tribal saying, captures the close relationships between native peoples on both sides of the border and American-Canadian connections generally. Photos of native art in a range of styles, from traditional to modern and abstract, illustrate each month. Six pieces were selected from students and recent graduates of OCAD U and six from IAIA students. The U.S. Embassy in Ottawa paid for the printing of 2,000 copies, which were distributed to embassy and consulate contacts across Canada.



Santa Fe Institute of American Indian Arts and OCAD University artists and instructors gather with Consul General Jim Dickmeyer, sixth from right, and Public Affairs Officer Scott Walker, second from right.

Photo by Consulate General Toronto

To build on the connections started by the calendar project, the consulate provided a travel grant to OCAD U to bring the IAIA students and a faculty member to Toronto. The IAIA group gave a public lecture, attended a class in OCAD U’s Indigenous Visual Studies program, visited leading Toronto museums and toured the consulate. At an OCAD U-hosted reception, U.S. Consul General Jim Dickmeyer told the gathering, “To have the opportunity to participate in this kind of exchange of talent and energy, and all that you’re putting together here, is one of the main reasons I love being involved in diplomacy.”

Representatives of both schools said they want to keep the connection going and conduct future exchanges.

DS Holds Cybersecurity Challenge



The virtual classroom has, at left, a display showing an Internet feed and, at right, a display showing course content slides.

Photo by Michael Washington

The Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Information Assurance Branch (IAB) recently challenged the Department's cybersecurity professionals to design avatars, computer-generated representations of themselves, and use them to move through a simulated embassy environment that measured their ability to protect the Department's unclassified information system. Ten cyber sleuths accepted the challenge. The event, similar to a role-playing computer game, let participants practice their skills in finding and fixing security vulnerabilities.

IAB chose a virtual environment for the Cybersecurity Challenge to showcase how an innovative use of technology can enhance and improve the training experience. Funded by the Information Resource Management Bureau's Information Technology Innovation Fund, the scenario scripted by IAB created an embassy-like setting that allowed participants to be fully immersed in the exercise. In the background, the Challenge identified training gaps, measured participants' learning and provided lessons about improving the virtual experience for future Challenges. The virtual environment allowed for worldwide participation without the travel costs normally associated with training.

Participants enjoyed the exercise. System Administrator Srinivas Kumar of the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi said the challenge "was an excellent experience and the first time I had seen something like this. Kudos to the team for conceptualizing it and making it a reality."

The Challenge's winners, Colin Hankey and Isaac Tawalah of the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia, the "Black Mambas" team, exemplified the technical, collaborative and problem-solving skills required to defend Department networks. They received a Meritorious Honor Award and an opportunity to meet with Department Chief Information Security Officer Bill Lay.

The Bureau of Diplomatic Security hopes the success of the Cybersecurity Challenge will encourage further training innovations across the Department.

Office Olympics Held in Yerevan

Although no one at the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan attended the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia, this year, several staff members did participate in the post's first Office Olympics. Organized by the CLO, the events included a paper airplane toss, mouse pad discus, trash can basketball, Post-it Note fencing and office chair bobsledding.

Laura Fredericks, assistant community liaison office coordinator, was hired especially to provide programming of fun events, said CLO Coordinator Molly Rydzynski, adding that Fredericks and Locally Employed (LE) Staff Sona Sargsyan had a hit with the Office Olympics. The Games opened with a video in which several staff members carried an "Olympic torch" around Yerevan, Armenia's capital. With the video fading to black, DCM Woodward Clark Price burst into the embassy's main entrance, lighting the "flame" to open the Games.

Each team sported its own flag and country affiliation, and each event involved two members of each team. Seven teams participated, representing a third of all staff.

Events were held every day for two weeks, during the lunch hour. Points were given for event medals, and the final total determined the winners, who were honored during the closing ceremony hosted by the ambassador.

"The teamwork shown by this event speaks to what you do as a team every day," said Ambassador John Heffern.

The Games had many rules, and many LE Staff relied on their American colleagues to explain such terms as "slam dunk" and "fishtailing." Participation was high and, included some Armenian colleagues who'd never participated in a mission event before. "We felt welcomed to form a team and participate," said one LE Staff member. "It was a great opportunity to have fun and show what we can do." Teams made up exclusively of LE Staff got the gold and silver medals.

To date, approximately 10 other missions have requested the nuts and bolts of how to do this event after seeing it reported through the CLO Listserv. Future events include outdoor competitions like the cafeteria tray relay and lawn chair gymnastics. The Front Office has promised to field a team for the next Games.



Participants in the Office Olympics' rubber band archery competition included, from left, Karen Avagyan, Karen Mirzoyan, Aaron Cummings, Ani Melkumyan, Artak Polian and Ashot Hakobyan.

Photo by Anush Babajanyan



GSOs from posts in West Africa gather in front of the new U.S. Embassy in Dakar.

Photo by Katarina Zegarac

GSOs in Africa Learn Logistics

General Services officers often worry about accounting for millions of dollars in government property, staying within strict federal acquisition guidelines when buying goods and services, clearing and delivering personal effects and supplies (especially in landlocked countries) and ensuring safe ground transportation or hospitable housing.

To achieve these goals, GSOs operate the logistical platforms to manage housing, travel, shipping, warehousing, procurement and motor pool services. In March, the Executive Office of the Bureau of African Affairs and the Bureau of Administration's Office of Logistics Management (A/LM) sponsored a workshop for GSOs assigned to AF posts in recognition of the challenges of logistics in West Africa. At the event in Dakar, Senegal, 12 participants talked shop, networked and learned.

GSOs rely on the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS), so A/LM Branch Chief Nathalie Stevens and veteran ILMS trainer Sara Rangos came to Dakar to assist with the training.

Participants manipulated live data and learned to produce advanced performance metrics, such as procurement cycle times and asset on-hand reports. They also visited Mission Senegal's offsite warehouse and reviewed practices on receiving, transferring and disposing of property. They witnessed the palletizing and wrapping used to protect stored household furnishings against heat, humidity and dust.

The two trainers produced post-specific reviews and noted areas for improvement.

Senior OBO Interior Designer Stephanie Shifler spoke about official residence preparations, and Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau Lewis Lukens—who was once a GSO in West Africa—offered candid career advice about the management profession.

Embassy Dakar and the participating GSOs agreed: Replicating this model of in-service regional logistical training can help make better GSOs in the field.

Consulate General Shanghai Expands

On March 3 U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai inaugurated its \$5 million expansion, which effectively doubles the consular section's workspace and adds 16 interview windows to the current 12.

Under Secretary for Management Patrick F. Kennedy, Consular Affairs Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Michele T. Bond and Shanghai Consul General Robert Griffiths cut the ribbon and unveiled a plaque.

Shanghai, like all of Mission China, has experienced double-digit growth in visa demand that continues unabated. In 2010, Shanghai's consular section first surpassed 100,000 visas per year; last year, it handled more than 400,000. Wait times remain below one week, typically two to three days.

Next, CG Shanghai expects to create a new American citizen services waiting room and work area to meet the needs of the estimated 50,000 U.S. citizens living in the Shanghai consular district. That project is likely to begin this summer.



Cutting the ribbon to open Shanghai's expanded consular area in March are, from left, Shanghai Consul General Robert Griffiths, Under Secretary for Management Patrick Kennedy and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Michele Bond.

Photo by Roger Huang

Diversity Notes

JOHN M. ROBINSON
OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS

Embracing Generational Diversity

With the arrival of each new Civil Service hire, A100 Class, appointee or intern we welcome various generations into our workforce. The gap in age between employees has never been more prevalent as baby boomers, like myself, delay retirement and work alongside colleagues who are the same age as their children or even grandchildren. As our workforce demographics shift, it is important to consider the impact of age diversity. For the first time in history, there are substantially four generations in our workforce. They are:

- Millennials: Born after 1980,
- Gen X: Born between 1965 and 1980,
- Baby Boomers: Born between 1946 and 1964, and
- Silent Generation: Born between 1925 and 1945.

Although the generations share similar ideals and characteristics, their preferences and habits in the workplace may greatly differ. So, how do you harness the benefits of a multi-generational workforce and decrease the potential for discord? By focusing on commonalities. By taking the time to find common ground and mutual understanding, we can embrace diversity of age and create a more inclusive work environment where each generation can contribute its unique strengths and talents. And when this is done well, we can forge stronger working relationships that will lead to a more engaged and productive workforce.

One way to find common ground is to dig deeper to dispel the inevitable stereotypes that exist about each generation. Perhaps you have heard that millennials are egocentric or that baby boomers lack innovation or that members of the Silent Generation are Luddites when it comes to technology? Such assumptions and preconceived notions should be avoided. Rather, we must be willing to engage in dialogue, which may at times be uncomfortable, about our perspectives, motivations and preferences in order to better understand one another.

Managers especially need to understand the best practical ways to engage employees from all generations in order to harness their strengths and skills. Here are some strategies from *Generations at Work: Managing the Clash of Veterans, Boomers, Xers, and Nexters in Your Workplace* by Ron Zemke, Claire Raines and Bob Filipczak:

- Treat all of your employees as you treat customers. Know and respect their interests and what is important to them.
- Offer flexible workplace options. Boomers may need to leave early to tend to aging parents. Gen Xers may need to arrive late, after dropping children off at child care.
- Respect competence and initiative however it looks or dresses. You can be a loyal American and also have a modest tattoo—or two or three.
- Hire the right people and nourish retention. Look especially for those employees who embrace differences of many kinds, including age.



Despite our differences, each generation has much to offer the world. The idea of instinctively using Google to quickly find answers to the most seemingly complicated questions is indeed a beneficial lesson that millennials have taught boomers. Remember that each generation has been marked by shared public events—the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, the draft, the arrival of the Beatles, the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., 9/11, the invention of Facebook and whatever happened last week. So the deep sentiments of the four generations may vary greatly.

But a few values should not vary at State—dedication to America's foreign policy and diplomacy goals, a deep and abiding loyalty to our country, faith in the American spirit and mutual respect for all who dedicate their professional lives to our mission, regardless of age or circumstance. If that is our workplace mantra, then State will be fine now and for generations to come. □

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John M. Robinson".



100,000 Strong

Embassy promotes initiative with college fair

By Krystle Norman, deputy public affairs officer, U.S. Embassy in Bridgetown, Barbados

The U.S. Embassy in Bridgetown pulled out all the stops in February to highlight Black History Month and promote President Obama's 100,000 Strong in the Americas initiative with a college fair that drew students, parents, faculty, alumni and the public. The presidential initiative aims to increase international study in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as foster region wide prosperity through greater international exchange of students.

Every year since 1997, Barbados has held a national college fair that attracts U.S. schools. Embassy Bridgetown's public affairs section organized its college fair specifically for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), to promote more diverse opportunities for Caribbean students.

"As HBCUs are historically underrepresented at international college fairs and also underrepresented within 100,000 Strong in the Americas, we wanted to showcase the rich diversity of higher education options in the United States," said Public Affairs Officer Yolonda Kerney.

The fair showcased a mix of HBCUs from different states and specializations. Originally, the plan was to bring five HBCU admissions representatives to Barbados, but as interest grew the number increased to nine, with three others participating virtually. Speakers included HBCU alumna Dr. Gwendolyn Boyd, president of Alabama State University and the first female president of an HBCU, and Grenadian Prime Minister Dr. Keith Mitchell, an alumnus and former professor of the HBCU Howard University.

Ambassador Larry Palmer, also an HBCU alumnus, addressed the more than 600 students, parents, teachers and guidance counselors on the history and importance of HBCUs, especially when U.S. educational opportunities were limited for people of color. "The very first class of students at Howard University included black, white and Native American students," he said. "So even at their establishment, HBCUs were inclusive, and we think that it's a testament to our core American values."

Prime Minister Mitchell encouraged students to be open to new opportunities and experiences at home and abroad. Boyd, the first African American woman to receive a master's degree in mechanical engineering from Yale University, advised that, "if your dreams don't scare you, they aren't big enough." Because a significant number of college-bound students from the Caribbean are female, the embassy wanted Boyd to speak on why she decided to attend two HBCUs and why an HBCU education has unique appeal for Caribbean students.

Twelve HBCU admissions representatives highlighted their curriculums, specializations and notable alumni. Schools represented included Fisk University, Alabama A&M University, North Carolina A&T University, Texas Southern University, Bethune-Cookman University, Grambling State University, Morehouse College, Florida A&M University and Howard University. Hampton University, Bennett College and Norfolk State University participated online.

At the schools' booths, students sought out applications, promotional items, scholarship offers and advice. Kerney said that "the turnout of the fair also demonstrated to recruiters that there is a strong interest in HBCU education among students from the Eastern Caribbean."

As a result of the HBCU college fair, Alabama State University has agreed to automatically admit all holders of Barbados Community College (BCC) associate degrees into its bachelor's programs in prosthetics or forensics, a key field at the university, and give them in-state tuition. Texas Southern University offered to give one or two merit-based tuition scholarships to Barbadian students for the 2014-2015 academic year and is negotiating to accept BCC associate degree holders into its bachelor's programs in the health sciences. Fisk University offered to give on-the-spot, merit-based scholarships to students during the college fair and is in negotiations to accept BCC associate degree holders into its bachelor's programs in education and special education at the in-state tuition rate. ■



Answering the Call

Volunteers assess wave of African applicants

By Corey Holmes, social media coordinator and Franklin Fellow, Bureau of African Affairs

In early February, an unusual task force convened in the George C. Marshall Conference Center. State Department task forces are usually organized to respond to an international crisis, such as a nation's military coup or natural disaster. This team was tasked with handling the overwhelming response received for a new Presidential initiative, the Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders (WFYAL), an academic exchange opportunity for sub-Saharan Africa.

When the fellowship was launched in June 2013, no one could have anticipated that by its application deadline of January 27, nearly 50,000 young Africans would have submitted applications, which included essays and resumes, for the 500 fellowship opportunities. Posts had promoted the program in meetings, conferences and workshops, via social media and on radio and TV.

The fellowship aims to empower and bolster young African leaders through academic coursework, leadership training, mentoring, networking and follow-on support. It concludes with a Washington, D.C., summit where President Barack Obama has said he wants to hear directly from participants: "your hopes, your dreams, what we can achieve together."

Beginning in June, the 500 fellows will spend six weeks at 20 top American universities and colleges that will provide tailored programs in one of three sectors: business and entrepreneurship, civic leadership and public management. The programs will combine faculty, curricula and local opportunities to impart professional and leadership skills. At the concluding summit gathering in late July, fellows will interact with the president and other senior U.S. government, business and civic leaders. A select group of 100 fellows will remain in the United States after the summit for an eight-week internship at U.S. businesses, NGOs and government offices.

On their return to their home countries, the fellows will receive networking opportunities, professional development and access

to seed funding. USAID-sponsored regional coordinators and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' (ECA) Alumni Office will work with posts in Africa and the returned fellows on these activities.

With 49,503 applications to read, ECA and its implementing partner, International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX)—a U.S.-based public policy organization committed to international education in academic research, professional training, and technical assistance—recruited volunteer application readers and hired experts from across the nation to analyze and score each application. Responding to ECA's call, more than 250 Department employees volunteered.

One, Kirsten Fuller, a program analyst from the Office of Emergencies in the Diplomatic and Consular Service, agreed to read and score 30 applications outside of work hours. "I wanted to read about the motivations of these individuals and how participation in the fellowship will assist in accomplishing their goals," she explained.

ECA Assistant Secretary Evan Ryan and Bureau of African Affairs (AF) Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Rob Jackson devised a solution under which the AF Public Diplomacy office (AF/PD) launched an unprecedented task force to help review the 15,000 applications that came from Nigeria alone. AF/PD established a workspace in the George C. Marshall Center, and the volunteers, in 10 days, read and scored nearly 5,000 applications. IREX readers were assigned the remaining 44,692 applications.

Approximately 16,500 hours of staffers' time were spent reviewing applications. By Feb. 24, all 49,503 applications had been read, scored and sent to the posts in the applicants' homelands. The posts, in turn, engaged in a selection phase, in collaboration with the WFYAL Interagency Working Group. Full mission involvement ensured that appropriate resources were available to interview applicants and rank candidates.



Above: Ambassador Wharton uses the microphone to stress a point during a panel discussion in Harare on the "opportunities and challenges facing young African leaders, which highlighted the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) and the Washington Fellowship; **Below:** A young man from Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, poses a question at the panel discussion. Photos by Thando Sibanda



Many post staffers were surprised by the large number of applicants. "My first reaction was relief," said Ryan Ingrassia, a public diplomacy officer at the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria, South Africa. Like many posts, Embassy Pretoria conducted an extensive outreach campaign involving radio interviews, TV commercials and letters from the ambassador to some of the nation's best and brightest young leaders. When more than 3,000 South Africans applied, the embassy was ready.

"We knew from the beginning that we were going to read the [applications from the] top 500 candidates and would then select 150 for interviews," Ingrassia said. I felt relieved because we worked so hard on recruitment. We knew it was a priority for President Obama and for our front office. We wanted to show we could find these new young audiences."

Applications from Zimbabwe also exceeded expectations. The U.S. Embassy in Harare had used every available opportunity and platform to publicize the fellowship, including social and print media, interactions with youth influencers and live events at its Information Resource Center and other venues. The Zimbabwean applicants were accomplished, engaged and truly inspiring, said one post staffer. Though the nation has limited opportunities for positive and highly visible bilateral engagement, the recruitment and selection of fellows created an opportunity for mission staff to meet the nation's next generation of business and civic leaders, the staffer said.

Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) Coordinator Macon Phillips' January visit gave Embassy Harare the opportunity to hold a panel featuring Phillips, Ambassador Bruce Wharton and three influential Zimbabwean youths (including an alumnus of the Young African Leaders Initiative) to highlight the fellowship. Hundreds of young Zimbabweans attended the standing-room-only event or participated via social media, and the embassy generated its largest live Twitter conversation. During and after the event, 280 virtual contributors produced more than 1,300 tweets, reaching more than 1.4 million Twitter users.

An IIP survey found 80 percent of Africans access the Internet through personal devices such as mobile phones and use desktop and laptop computers at Internet cafés. They stay current with global news via BBC, CNN, Facebook, Twitter, Google, Yahoo and Al-Jazeera. Half of those surveyed had taken part in a video chat, more than a third had taken an online educational course and more than three-fourths access email daily and use social media, primarily Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

To tap into Africa's growing digital culture, IIP and ECA are developing virtual platforms that will build on posts' American Spaces to interact with the roughly 49,000 young African leaders who applied but did not gain one of the fellowships. USAID will support creation of centers to build leadership skills by building on existing African institutions and initiatives that provide leadership training. The centers may also host regional events for the fellows, but their chief objective is reaching a broader audience of emerging youth leaders. USAID's implementing partner, meanwhile, will organize regional events for the fellows to network with each other and with leaders from a range of sectors and industries. Through regional coordinators based in Johannesburg, Nairobi and Accra, U.S. embassies and USAID will establish internship opportunities and mentors. The broad range of engagement will create opportunities for these young leaders to propel economic growth and prosperity and to strengthen democratic institutions across Africa. □



More than 300 young Zimbabweans gathered in January for the panel discussion on YALI and the Washington Fellowship, held at Zimbabwe's first technology and business entrepreneurship hub.

Photo by Thando Sibanda



Members of Embassy Nairobi's health unit gather with Forest, their newest colleague.

Photo by Peter Gichinga

Paws That Refresh

Therapy Dog Delights Mission Kenya

By Thomas Kerrihard, M.D., regional medical officer/psychiatrist, U.S. Embassy in Nairobi

A 110-pound German shepherd dog named Forest has for two years helped the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi's staff find time to take a break, smile and play. But that's no surprise: Forest is the State Department's first "therapy dog."

As a Regional Medical Officer/Psychiatrist, I own, trained and handle Forest, who provides therapeutic support to staff members. The Office of Medical Services supports using Forest in this way. Like many certified therapy dogs, Forest is used to foster a light and playful spirit among employees who have faced numerous hardships in recent years. Mental health professionals know that taking short breaks during the workday reduces

stress and increases productivity; Forest is a medical intervention intended to encourage these breaks.

Embassy Nairobi, rated critical for crime and terrorism, is Africa's largest U.S. embassy, with more than 2,000 people under Chief of Mission authority. In recent years, local home invasions and car-jackings, the threat of election-related violence and, worst of all, the horror of last September's terrorist attack on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi have created an environment in which feeling overwhelmed and burned out could become widespread unless employees and family members learn proactive techniques to manage stress. Teaching and reinforcing such techniques is a key responsibility for



Kenyan employees Jenipher Okatch, left, and Rita Were play Frisbee with Forest.

Photo by Peter Gichinga

a post's health unit, and ours relies on Forest to help with stress relief. His visits to the embassy encourage staff to pause and take time to smile and laugh with co-workers. He reminds them that play is important—and therapeutic.

Forest has been strongly endorsed by Ambassador Robert F. Godec, who says he always appreciates a visit to the front office from Forest. "Forest has been a wonderful addition to our embassy community," Godec said. "Forest brings us together and helps everyone to smile, even on the toughest days."

Forest arrived in the Office of Medical Services in 2011 and at Embassy Nairobi, his first overseas posting, in early 2012. At a 2013 awards ceremony, Godec presented him with an honorary embassy badge.

When Forest comes to work, his schedule is busy. The Community Liaison Office announces the days of his visits in advance through emails, in the embassy newsletter and on closed-circuit informational screens throughout embassy buildings. Calls and emails then start coming into the health unit from embassy departments, sections, office groups, individual employees and family members requesting a visit, and if that doesn't work, there's always "Frisbee with Forest," scheduled every two to three hours on the chancery front lawn.

Locally Employed (LE) Staff, American staff and Eligible Family Members have all reported benefits from their brief encounters with Forest. While Americans generally accept dogs as a source of fun, many Kenyans are less exposed to well-trained dogs and more familiar with guard dogs or untamed animals on the street. As a very large German shepherd, Forest can be frightening and intimidating at first. Discovering his therapeutic benefits took a little more time for many of the LE Staff, but many are now some of Forest's greatest fans.

Thus, Forest has become a cultural diplomat, giving many Kenyans their first exposure to a well-trained, friendly dog and shifting their general attitude toward animals as pets. Many Kenyans at post now appreciate the value of a therapy dog and have come to understand the important role pets play in Americans' lives. In fact, hardly a day goes by now without my hearing Kenyan staffers say, "How is Forest today?" "When is Forest coming back?" or "We miss Forest."

For many Kenyans, Forest has been their first opportunity to touch a dog, let alone to "shake hands" or play Frisbee. I keep Forest on a tight leash around anyone who expresses hesitancy about close contact. However, an amazing transformation typically takes place after a few times watching Forest follow commands, fetch balls and enjoy the affection and attention of strangers. The local staff members are now among the most eager for Forest's next embassy visit.

"Kenyans are hesitant around all pets because of our cultural upbringing," observed Roselyn Linguli, who works as a customer service representative. She said she'd learned that dogs were to protect and cats were to keep rats away. "Forest made me appreciate dogs, and being a therapy dog made it more interesting when I considered his ability to bring calm to people."

"Nothing beats playing Frisbee with Forest," added Elizabeth Kimani, a Kenyan shipping assistant in the General Services Office.

Americans at post are also wild about Forest. Jeffrey Cernyar, an FSO who serves as representative to U.N. Environmental Program, said he brought his children, age 9 and 11, to meet Forest and found the dog's obedience impressive. They tried some of that training on their own German shepherd and "find that she really enjoys the structure and attention, and responds very intelligently."

Kenyans outside the embassy enjoy Forest, too. In public spaces, such as the Karura Forest near the embassy, they respond positively when they see Forest dive into streams and ponds to fetch sticks. He brings the stick to them and eagerly waits for them to join the game. He is routinely the object of group photos with Kenyan children and adults. The shift from fear and skepticism to laughter and joy is commonplace when Kenyans witness Forest's obedient and playful behavior.

Forest's certification/registration comes from Therapy Dogs International, one of several recognized therapy dog organizations that provide testing, certification, insurance and registration of volunteer therapy dogs. Therapy dogs are not service dogs, such as seeing-eye dogs for the visually impaired, nor are they trained to assist individuals with disabilities. Instead, they are trained and certified to provide affection and comfort to people in difficult, lonely or stressful environments, such as hospitals and nursing homes. Some are even certified to offer comfort and emotional support to disaster victims and have assisted victims of the World Trade Center terrorist attack and Boston Marathon bombing.

Therapy dogs come in a wide variety of shapes, sizes, skills and styles, but all must meet specified health and performance standards set forth by one of the recognized therapy dog organizations. They are tested for obeying commands and responding calmly in unpredictable situations. Therapy dogs must be comfortable with a variety of people, including children, the ill and those with mental health conditions.

Therapy dogs in the workplace are becoming more commonplace. I have seen therapy dogs decrease stress, increase morale and even foster interoffice relationships. The response to Forest at Embassy Nairobi has been immensely positive and productive.

Therapy dogs are not for everyone. There are psychological, cultural and medical reasons to proceed cautiously with them in such locales as hospitals, where they are not allowed in the rooms of patients with compromised immune systems. Some people fear dogs, and handlers are trained to recognize that discomfort. But for most people, therapy dogs like Forest offer an amazing opportunity to improve work-life balance. □



Above: A group of Boy and Girl Scouts of Kenya pet Forest in Karura Park.

Photo by Thomas Kerrihard

Below: The author, left, smiles as Ambassador Robert F. Godec presents Forest with his honorary embassy badge at an awards ceremony in Nairobi.

Photo by Gilbert Otieno





At an Embassy Seoul program, filmmaker Judy Lieff, center, and Eric Neudel, at her left, gather with independent filmmakers.

Photo by Young Hee Park

Picturing Disability

Embassy exhibit challenges preconceptions

By Geon Hyeong Cho and Eun Kyong Choi, cultural affairs specialists, U.S. Embassy in Seoul

Two recent visual arts programs sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Seoul used film and photography to approach disability in new ways and reaffirm that, as Helen Keller wrote, “The most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched; they must be felt with the heart.”

For last year’s American Film Showcase, Embassy Seoul chose two documentary films that encouraged viewers to reexamine their

preconceived ideas about the concepts of ability and disability. “Lives Worth Living” recounts the historic struggle of U.S. disability rights advocates, culminating with the signing into law of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990. This year, Embassy Seoul partnered with the Disability Rights Film Festival in Korea to make the film the centerpiece of the event.

Department of State Senior Advisor

for International Disability Rights Judith Heumann opened the festival with a congratulatory video message. “Films too often portray disabled people as those to be pitied, who cannot be in charge of their own lives,” she said. “This film,” she continued, “shatters that misperception and demonstrates that disabled people, like all others, want equality and equal opportunity, and are willing to accept nothing less.”



Judy Lieff and Eric Neudel meet with staff of the Korea National University of Welfare.

Photo by Hyun Jin Park



PAO Brent Byers appreciates the exhibit.

Photo by Eun Kyong Choi

The other documentary featured in the film showcase was “Deaf Jam,” which follows a group of deaf high school students in New York as they compete in a poetry slam using American Sign Language. Korean deaf and hearing audiences alike identified with the struggle of teen Aneta Brodski, who uses sign language poetry to carve a place for herself in the world.

The directors of both films spent a week in Korea meeting students, educators, dancers, political leaders and independent filmmakers to break down stereotypes, foster mutual understanding and bring messages of empowerment to Korea’s disability communities. The films were also screened at an offsite conference for more than 40 Korean film producers, who are enormously influential in shaping public opinion. The impact of these films on audiences was so powerful that both will continue to be screened in Korea during 2014. Embassy Seoul will partner with the Korea Differently Abled Federation to show “Lives Worth Living” in 13 regions outside the capital. “Deaf Jam” will be featured at the Seoul International Women’s Film Festival in June.

The other facet of the embassy’s visual media outreach was the photo exhibition “Sight Unseen: International Photography by Blind Artists.” The exhibit, which showcased more than 110 works by photographers who are blind or have limited sight, compelled attendees to think of disability and disabled people in a different way.

Held at the Sejong Cultural Center in Seoul in collaboration with the University of California Riverside’s California Museum of Photography, “Sight Unseen” conveyed a powerful message about the perceptive vision of those who lack physical sight. The photographers in the exhibit approached their art from differing standpoints, but what they created was completely unlike conventional photography. It was, as exhibit curator Douglas McCulloh put it, “full of paradox and revelation.” According to McCulloh, many photographers who cannot see must often rely on family and friends to help handle the camera and get the objects in the photo set for the shot, as the photographer envisions it.

The physical images the photographers produce are mere abstractions of the artist’s inner vision, free from the clutter of the sighted world. One photographer, Evgen Baycar, actually apologizes to sighted viewers, as they can only view reproductions of his work, not the originals in the private gallery of his mind.

All photographers in the exhibit make their art by drawing on their other senses, which are often enhanced, and by finding inspiration in surprising ways. Henry Butler of New Orleans, also an accomplished blues pianist, uses sound cues to direct his camera lens. For Rosita McKenzie, a disability equality educator and photographer, the creative impulse is sparked by the richness of the sounds, scents and landscape of her native Edinburgh. Gerardo Nigenda of Mexico sees his photographs as an extension of what he is: “living, smelling, touching, hearing. These experiences, these memories, which are my negatives, I have them in my mind.”

Regardless of whether the photographer was trying to capture a personal, internal world, record the world or make a political statement, those viewing the exhibit are forced to ask what it means to be considered “blind.” Perhaps photographer Alice Wingwall expressed it best: “I was tired of people saying to me, ‘How can you take a photograph when you can’t see anything?’ And I think they weren’t asking me, they were telling me, ‘How can you do this? It’s unthinkable.’ Well, I can do it. What I say to them is that the image starts in the brain.”

Embassy Seoul’s American Film Showcase and the exhibition “Sight Unseen” showed audiences that the label “disabled” does more to limit and stigmatize people than the actual diminishment of a physical ability or sense. Rethinking our preconceptions about what it means to be disabled compels us to reject limitations imposed on others based on their perceived differences. It also helps us look toward our own impending changes in ability as we age with a sense of wonder, not dread. □

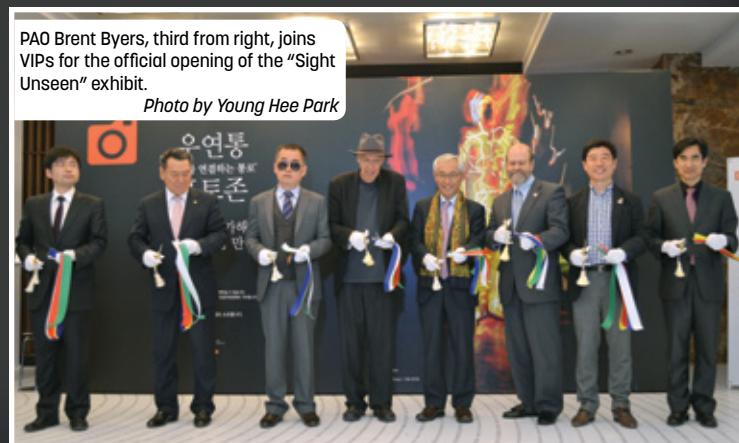


Eric Neudel, second from left, talks with a service recipient at Suwon Welfare Center.
Photo by Hyun Jin Park



The image *Big Splash 2012* is from the “Sight Unseen” exhibit.

Photo by Bruce Hall



PAO Brent Byers, third from right, joins VIPs for the official opening of the “Sight Unseen” exhibit.

Photo by Young Hee Park

DREAMING BIG

Embassy film promotes soccer diplomacy

By Mike Harker, cultural affairs officer, U.S. Embassy in Dhaka



On Feb. 3, inside the Bangladesh Football Federation's headquarters in Dhaka, 50 reporters and television crew members packed into a conference room, waiting for former FIFA World Cup star players Linda Hamilton and Tony Sanneh. The pair were "sports envoys," former stars who train other nations' players, sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' SportsUnited program.

Bangladesh wants to play in the 2022 World Cup, but its men's and women's teams face an uphill fight in the FIFA rankings. The reporters were wondering whether the envoys' visit marked a shift in Bangladesh's approach to training its young players, especially women, for international success. That very question is the subject of a new documentary, "SportsUnited," created by the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka for its nationally broadcast television show, *A Conversation with Bangladesh*. The documentary, produced by a local film company for the public affairs section (PAS), takes viewers behind the scenes of Hamilton and Sanneh's weeklong visit, showing the duo doing youth outreach, media engagements and training camps with some of Bangladesh's best young players.

Throughout the week the duo shared skills and expertise, and explained how sports taught them about diversity, teamwork, overcoming adversity and self-confidence. The pair discussed and showed how sports transcends language, economic and social barriers; builds understanding between people of different cultures; and forges life long relationships. They ended their visit with two exhibition games against Bangladesh's male and female rising stars.



Linda Hamilton autographs a ball during a training session for varsity players from American International School Dhaka.

Photo by Kaharba Productions



To produce “SportsUnited,” PAS worked with a local film company whose three-man crew followed the sports envoys’ visit, filming with a pair of Canon EOS 5D Mark III cameras and shotgun microphones. Unburdened by excessive equipment, the filmmakers moved quickly from soccer clinics to outreach programs, ran on the field with the sports envoys and captured players’ game-time commentary and audience reactions.

Shooting at the Bangladesh Football Federation field, the documentarians filmed Hamilton and Sanneh’s Junior League training, which focused on players’ technical, tactical, physical and psychological challenges. They also filmed the envoys as they:

- Met with students in religious schools who were learning English via ECA’s English Access Microscholarship Program,
- Talked with fans at The Edward M. Kennedy Center for Public Service and the Arts (one of the post’s six American Spaces) and
- Trained players at the leading Bangladesh sports education institute, Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishtan.

The resulting 30 hours and 200 gigabytes of footage were then edited, with PAS working with the production company to review footage, determine the storyline, identify sound bites, select licensed music and record narration. After a few nights of editing, the team distilled it all into a fast-paced, 20-minute documentary.

At a viewing party at the Bangladesh Football Federation, Junior League players laughed and cheered as they watched themselves running on screen and lobbing soccer balls to Hamilton and Sanneh.

“At first I was so scared to play with people as famous as Linda and Tony,” recalled Ayesha Khatun Bithi, a player from the girls’ Junior League. “But training with them has really motivated me and has helped my team focus.” She said she looks at the Federation’s 2022 World Cup banners on the soccer field and now believes, “We’re getting better. If we keep training like this we can make it to the World Cup one day.” □

Top: Kaharba Productions films Tony Sanneh at Jaago Foundation, a school for underprivileged children; **Bottom:** Linda Hamilton and Tony Sanneh plan their soccer drills at the Bangladesh Institute of Sports. *Photos by Kaharba Productions.*



The documentary discusses the value of participation in sports and Bangladesh’s prospects in international soccer. Hamilton, a defender for the 1991 FIFA Women’s World Cup champion team, and Sanneh, a former defender and midfielder for the Los Angeles Galaxy and player in the 2002 World Cup, speak about the road ahead for the Bangladeshi men’s and women’s teams.

“It’s possible for them to make it to the World Cup,” said Sanneh, “but you can’t just say you want something to happen unless you do the work to get there.” They urged the soccer players they worked with to dream big.

The PAS documentary extended the duo’s messages to audiences beyond the soccer pitch. Aired in March as a special episode of its monthly primetime, national talk show “A Conversation with Bangladesh,” the documentary captured the sports envoys’ experiences and impressions from their visit, giving audiences a look at the people-to-people impact of sports diplomacy. The documentary reached more than 7 million viewers, according to Bangladesh’s television ratings agency. After its broadcast, PAS placed the video on its Facebook page, gaining 700,000 views. On YouTube, it received hundreds of views.

“A Conversation with Bangladesh”

Since its May 2012 launch, “Conversation” has aired more than 18 episodes, reaching 7 million to 10 million viewers per broadcast. The show has connected visiting U.S. officials and cultural envoys with Bangladeshis on such issues as democracy, human rights and entrepreneurship. Guests have included former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Nisha Biswal and Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan Mozena.

“Conversation” is a unique platform for embassy messaging and an opportunity for U.S. officials to engage with Bangladeshi civil society groups, NGOs and entrepreneurs. PAS produces “Conversation” in partnership with Desh TV, with PAS coordinating guests and talking points and Desh TV handling filming and broadcasting. Given that episodes can usually be planned, filmed and edited in a few days, the show is a flexible means of addressing large audiences on issues and events that matter to Bangladeshis.





Post of the Month



At 12,389 feet, Mt. Fuji can be seen from multiple vantage points in Tokyo on clear days. Here it rises behind Shinjuku's skyscraper-laden business district.

TOKYO

Embassy sustains 'remarkable alliance' in world's largest metropolis

Story and Photos by Isaac D. Pacheco





In seeking to understand the essence of Japan's capital city, it is wise to consider the Asian parable of the three blind monks and the elephant. Each monk was asked to describe what lay before him based on touch alone, and each came to a different conclusion based on the part of the animal he encountered. Similarly, one person's limited perspective is not enough to holistically describe a metropolis as large and varied as Tokyo. Even someone who spends weeks or months exploring the city's many neighborhoods might not see the full picture.

"Japanese culture is so rich and so complex, and also so deeply individual and unique, that it's daunting," said Paul A. Wedderien, minister-counselor for Management Affairs. "Not even an 80-year-old native-born Japanese would claim to know Tokyo; there's too much Tokyo for any one person to know."

One of the world's largest cities, Tokyo contains 23 wards and roughly 12 million inhabitants. Along with nearby Yokohama (*State Magazine*, Feb. 2014, pg. 8), it is one of only two Japanese cities with a growing population. Tokyo is part of the strategic Kanto Plain. A center of Japanese power since at least the 16th century, Kanto stretches out to the mountains on three sides and the sea on the west.

Though post war construction can often leave them indistinguishable, many of Tokyo's neighborhoods retain a flavor of their origins as centers of commerce, entertainment or power. Summertime sees a proliferation of colorful festivals, called *omatsuri*, where young (and sometimes older) men and women carry local shrines on their shoulders and parade through the streets to the accompaniment of merrymakers.

Above: The 2,080-foot-tall Tokyo Skytree is the world's second-tallest freestanding structure, and features the highest observation deck.

Right: In this multi-shot panorama, passengers wait for their train in the Tokyo subway system as another train departs from the opposite platform.

Opposite top: A massive Torii marks the entrance to Meiji Jingu at the center of Yoyogi Park.

Opposite center: Pedestrians cross a busy intersection near a neon-lit shopping area in Shinjuku.





Whereas large populations in tightly packed urban settings can lead to chaotic sprawl and congestion, Tokyo stands out for its orderliness. With one of the world's most reliable public transit systems, a highly developed, modern infrastructure and a public ethic of common politeness, this enormous metropolis is delightfully livable.

"There's a tremendous amount of considerateness in everyone's day-to-day interactions," said Donna Ann Welton, minister-counselor for Political Affairs. "I really find that everyday life is much more gracious than a lot of other places. It's a very sophisticated place to be no matter what part of Japan you're in, and it's quite beautiful. There's a little bit of something for everybody."

Still, in a metropolitan area that is home to more than 30 million residents, life moves quickly. Like so many cells rushing through a body's veins and arteries, the people on Tokyo's many crowded streets and in its massive network of subterranean passages move with purpose and efficiency. They create a unique pulse that enlivens the metropolis and helps it flourish.

Each street seems to have a story to tell. From dark, solitary lanes to bustling, flashy thoroughfares, Tokyo's myriad avenues and alleyways are worlds unto themselves. Every passageway reveals something different—sometimes strange, beautiful or unexpected—about the swirling metropolis around it.

With so much happening everywhere at once, it's no wonder that the city is so often portrayed in pop culture as an always-on, neon-lit futurescape. Many areas of Tokyo do have these exciting characteristics, but the metropolis also has its quiet moments, even in the busiest parts of town.

Tokyo is dotted with hundreds of temples and shrines. Many of these small islands of reverence and reflection are among the most beautiful and serene spaces in the city. They can be found everywhere, from major city-center parks to hidden back alleys.



Within this contrasting agglomeration of tradition and technology, serenity and activity, State Department officials and other employees at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo work to sustain the vibrant bilateral partnership between the United States and Japan.

"This relationship is well established and deep," said Jessica Webster, minister-counselor for Economic and Science Affairs. "Based on that relationship, a lot of other things can be built out in the region. Tokyo itself is a fantastic city, although there is a great deal beyond the capital."

The late Ambassador Mike Mansfield, who spent 11 years as chief of mission in Japan, making him the longest-serving American ambassador there, was famous for describing the partnership between the United States and Japan as "the most important bilateral relationship in the world, bar none." According to the embassy's current leadership, Mansfield's proclamation is as true today as it was more than two decades ago.

"This is an extremely vital alliance. Japan continues to be, in many ways, our closest ally, our most significant friend and the relationship that we go to first in the Asia/Pacific when addressing problems all around the world," said Kurt Tong, deputy chief of mission.

"We are like-minded democracies that share the same values with respect to human rights, individual liberties, freedom of press, freedom of assembly—all of that," he continued. "Not only are our two countries unified by a really incredible web of mutual understanding and appreciation, but also by the ability for Americans and Japanese to work together, and that's extraordinarily important for our national interests."

The profoundly positive connection between the United States and Japan, the world's first- and third-largest economies, respectively, has resulted in a thriving trade and investment partnership. Japan is America's fourth-largest export market for goods, and its fourth-largest import partner as well. Both countries continue to engage in dialogue over the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP), a pending free-trade agreement that its supporters say can dramatically enhance an already robust economic relationship.

"The TPP is not only going to be a job creator here at home and in Japan and throughout East Asia, but it's going to ensure that the highest standards that we set in our own economies become the standard by which everybody then begins to measure their own judgments about investment and about the marketplace. And that improves the certainty of investment as well as creates a stability from which every single one of us will benefit," said Secretary of State John Kerry at the 50th U.S./Japan Business Conference in Washington, D.C., last November.



A young woman dressed in a traditional Japanese kimono visits a shrine in Ueno Park.



Above: Located at the southern end of the Imperial Palace grounds, Nijubashi Bridge is one of the most famous tourist sites in Japan.

Right: Ambassador Caroline Kennedy steps out from a horse-drawn carriage at the Imperial Palace, where she presented her credentials to the Emperor.
Photo by U.S. Embassy Tokyo





Above: A vendor weighs fish for a customer at a stall beneath the Yamanote Line train tracks in Ameyoko, the sight of Tokyo's post-WWII black market.

Below: Hundreds of Japanese residents enjoy a concert and picnic on the lawn inside the U.S. Embassy Tokyo housing complex during the annual Friendship Day celebration.



Regional security cooperation is also deeply embedded in the bilateral partnership. Approximately 52,000 U.S. service members are forward deployed to bases in Japan and work closely with their Japan Self-Defense Force counterparts to bolster the security alliance.

"The alliance with Japan is one of the cornerstones for the Asia/Pacific region," said Navy Capt. James O'Leary, Embassy Tokyo defense attaché. "Japan is one of the key and cornerstone nations in the region, and the key to the security in the area. They have a great connection with the U.S. and are very interested in maintaining the regional stability."

Underpinning these strategic connections are close people-to-people relationships built upon a decades-long foundation of mutual respect and appreciation for each other's cultures.

"Japan is culturally distinct from the United States. We didn't have much of a relationship at all until just a little over 100 years ago, and we've only had the kind of intense relationship we have now for the past 60 years," said Tong. "Having such a strong relationship with such positive feelings in both directions, despite physical, cultural and linguistic distance, is a pretty significant achievement for the United States. This mission is the most important single element keeping up the equity that we have in this relationship."

The embassy's public affairs team helps sustain these interpersonal relationships and promote American initiatives through a number of outreach programs that recognize the importance of face-to-face interactions and cultural appreciation.

"Public diplomacy in Japan is really at the forefront of our broader mission engagement as never before," said Mark J. Davidson, minister counselor for Public Affairs. "This reflects an understanding both here in the mission and in Washington that the range of our strategic goals with Japan—from strengthening security cooperation to deepening political coordination in various regions of the world, to broadening our trade and economic relationship—really depends on a foundation of strong people-to-people ties and mutual understanding."

In line with its efforts to bolster people-to-people relationships, the embassy has invested considerable resources in a nationwide campaign that promotes educational opportunities in the United States. Part of this effort involves educating the Japanese public about the visa application process for students and providing them with the tools and resources to make informed decisions about studying in the United States. According to Tong, the program is aimed not only at increasing the cultural connection between the two nations via academic exchange but also at helping Japan develop the "global human resources" that it needs to compete and prosper in the 21st century.

Embassy Tokyo's consular affairs team, led by Consul General Steve Maloney and a staff of 13 officers, 46 Foreign Service national employees and six Eligible Family Members, helps protect the interests of the nearly 115,000 Americans living in Japan, and handles a heavy visa load that makes outreach programs like the education exchange possible. Tokyo's consular section alone adjudicates 75,000-80,000 nonimmigrant visas every year. That number increases to more than 100,000 per year when applications from U.S. consulates throughout Japan are included in the tally.





Above: Before departing from Japan for Bali, Indonesia, on Oct. 4, 2013, Secretary of State John Kerry shakes hands with U.S. Defense Attaché Capt. James D. O'Leary, as Embassy Tokyo Deputy Chief of Mission Kurt Tong and Haneda Airport Administrator Masanori Suzuki look on. *Photo by U.S. Embassy Tokyo*

Opposite: A blur of traffic whizzes through a busy intersection near Roppongi.

"The officers like being here; they like Japan; they and their LE Staff colleagues are doing work that they see the benefit of, and they are committed, dedicated and motivated," said Maloney. "We are happy to be here protecting the Americans who live in Japan and facilitating legitimate travel between Japan and the United States."

As the Asia/Pacific region continues to undergo rapid change, the United States has renewed its efforts to bolster key institutions in the U.S.-Japan relationship. Embassy Tokyo is at the forefront of that campaign, working to strengthen the security alliance, building upon a stout economic partnership and using public diplomacy programs to engage with the Japanese people in meaningful ways.

"We are not just recommitting to the partnership that has been the cornerstone of Asia's security and prosperity for the past six decades, we are reinvigorating and redefining the ways that we need to carry that relationship into the future," said Secretary Kerry. "And I think as you look at our work together, whether it's on security, on trade, on global challenges and people-to-people ties, we are proving true what Prime Minister Abe said in Washington: No one should ever doubt the strength of this remarkable alliance." □



Post of the Month



At a Glance Japan

Capital: Tokyo

Government type: Parliamentary government with a constitutional monarchy

Area: 377,915 sq. km.

Comparative area: Slightly smaller than California

Population: 127,103,388

Languages: Japanese (official)

Religions: Shintoism, Buddhism and Christianity

GDP per capita: \$37,100

Export partners: China, U.S., South Korea, Thailand and Hong Kong

Export commodities: Motor vehicles, semiconductors, iron and steel products, auto parts, plastic materials and power-generating machinery

Import commodities: Petroleum, liquid natural gas, clothing, semiconductors, coal and audio and visual apparatus

Currency: yen (JPY)

Internet country code: .jp

Source: The World Factbook



Gathered at the fellowship's renaming ceremony in December 2012 are, from left, the author, 2012-2013 fellow Lane Bahl, Executive Council on Diplomacy President and Executive Director Solveig Spielmann, 2007-2008 fellow Mark Biedlingmaier and Andrew Eagleburger, son of Secretary of State Eagleburger.

Photo courtesy of the Executive Council on Diplomacy

New Perspectives

Fellowship offers corporate experience

By Joe Callahan, 2013-2014 Eagleburger Fellow

Every bidding season is filled with prospects for new overseas adventures, but perhaps the most adventurous opportunity is that offered by the Lawrence S. Eagleburger Fellowship. The assignment provides a mid career officer first hand knowledge of U.S. business operations through a year-long training assignment to the private sector. The State Department's private sector partner, the Executive Council on Diplomacy (ECD), matches the fellow with a company.

In 1986, the Department partnered with ECD to establish the Corporate Placement Program, which was renamed in 2012 to honor former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, a champion of economic and commercial issues.

"When I was in Slovakia in the early 90s, I was the economic/commercial officer," said Chris Sandrolini, now deputy chief of mission (DCM) at the U.S. Embassy in Bridgetown and a 1995-1996 Eagleburger alumni. "When I came out of Slovakia in 1995, I had been interested already in this program, and even though I'm a political officer, I had fun doing econ/commercial work." He was assigned to telecommunications firm US West after an introduction to a senior executive by a colleague in the Foreign Commercial Service.

Mark Biedlingmaier worked for DuPont as the 2007-2008 Eagleburger fellow. "I was DCM in Brazzaville, and I thought this would be a perfect opportunity," he recalled. "Maybe it was the seven-year itch, or maybe the midlife Foreign Service crisis. I had

been overseas for successive tours and I thought it would be very worthwhile to come back to the States and reengage."

Another fellow, Lane Darnell Bahl, became interested in the program during her tour as senior economic officer at the U.S. Embassy in Kosovo. "I went around trying to find an expert that could come in and help us reform the insurance sector, and there was nobody available," she said. "After Kosovo I took the Econ Course, and I kept bringing up insurance, and none of the professors or specialists were familiar with the real-world applications of insurance as an essential financial tool."

Assigned to ACE Insurance in 2012, Bahl spearheaded the company's foray into low-cost insurance policies purchased through mobile telephones. "Low-cost policies with low premiums and moderate payouts can be a tool for lifting people out of poverty," she said. By avoiding having to sell their income-generating resources when tragedy strikes, the poor can avoid plunging further into poverty, she explained.

As an Eagleburger fellow, Biedlingmaier connected DuPont and Department of State officials around the world. "I happened to meet [DuPont CEO] Chad Holliday, and he said 'Mark, have you ever thought how difficult it is for us even to gain access to an embassy overseas?' He was exactly right. I reached out and planned this trip to Europe, and we visited 12 embassies in 15 days." DuPont replicated the program in each of its geographic bureaus.

Biedlingmaier expanded his horizons beyond management issues. "I was inviting DuPont to talk with our avian flu coordinator," he said. "I was connecting our legal office into Embassy Kyiv and DuPont, as far as how do we do a united approach on patent infringement, and stopping in France and Rome to discuss [genetically modified organisms]. It developed my problem-solving capabilities as well, in a much broader perspective far beyond management."

Sandrolini leveraged his experience at the Department to help US West expand its international reach. "They were very interested in developing the cellular business in India," he said. "That's where I found my familiarity working with other countries made it easy for me to reach out to our embassies and consulates and know how to talk to people in ways that they might not necessarily know. I had worked in India before, so I attended meetings of the U.S.-India Business Council."



Above: The author, left, meets snowboarder Chas Guldemond at the 2014 X Games in Aspen, Colo.

Photo by Joe Callahan

Below: Bridgetown Deputy Chief of Mission Chris Sandrolini, a 1996 alumnus of the fellowship, announces funding to upgrade Regional Security System aircraft in 2012.

Photo by Embassy Bridgetown

The fellowship helps companies better navigate public-private partnerships as well. "It occurred to me very early on that one of the big issues was that we really don't understand each other's worlds, or the environments that we make decisions in, so we assume things about the other that may not be right," said ECD board member Fruzsina Harsanyi, who hosted three fellows while at the firms ABB and Tyco. "It is good not only for the government people who come into the private sector, but for the private sector people to have a mirror put up to their own practices."

Biedlingmaier sees a significant career upside to the fellowship, noting his subsequent assignments as chief of staff in Baghdad and DCM in Luxembourg.

His Eagleburger experience, he said, shaped his approach in these positions. "I plugged in immediately when I went to Baghdad to the OSAC Council, once a month getting together with 30 or 40 major corporations. And it was just amazing, all of a sudden I thought, 'there's the value, right there,' getting a foothold for the American private sector into a country."

Next, as chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Luxembourg, "I did the same thing: I plugged into Google and a lot of the multinationals. The embassy was then a key player, with both [the host government and American business] sides coming to us for advice and guidance."

Bahl, now deputy political counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum, said her knowledge of mobile banking is helpful in Sudan, "where they have an active mobile banking system."

"Within country they are able to transfer funds over their cell phones," she said. "We are so behind the curve on this sector in the United States... [and] not being the lead in these innovations makes it even more important that we know what's going on in other countries. [The fellowship] gave me a year where I could delve into something very deeply in an area that I would not be able to gain expertise in anywhere in the Department. Being inside a private corporation opens you up to the subtleties and the principles necessary for private-public partnership building."

Sandrolini also endorses the fellowship, "especially for people like me—those who are not economic/commercial officers but do have the objective of going on to be in a leadership position, like a DCM or an ambassador or a principal officer or anyone in a position to run a U.S. government entity."

FSOs, he explained, often deal with business constituencies, "and anything you can do to help get ready for that, to be sympathetic to their interests and know that culture, is hugely valuable. It's all about connecting people, getting them together to solve problems and finding the right people to do that." □





Female Afghan Army officers pose for a photo with several Americans after a professional development event co-hosted by the U.S. Embassy in Kabul.
State Department photo

PROTECTING THE PROTECTORS

Embassy supports women in Afghan security

By Larissa Mihalisko, Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations civilian/military planner, U.S. Embassy in Kabul

In the mid-1990s, an Afghan brigadier general traded her Army fatigues for a burqa after the Taliban overwhelmed her nation's capital, Kabul, imposing strict limits on women's freedom. Afghanistan's sole female paratrooper succumbed to the life of many Afghan women under Taliban rule, one of isolation and restrictions arising from the Taliban's interpretation of Islam.

The fall of the Taliban ushered in renewed and in some ways unprecedented—opportunities for Afghan women. Thanks to the combined efforts of the Afghan and U.S. governments, civil society and the international community, millions of girls have gone through school since 2002, and a new generation of women has been exposed to life in civil society, government, politics, education and the security forces.

The Army brigadier, too, gained freedom. "I returned to work in my uniform and trashed my burqa," she said. She resumed life as a paratrooper, making her first leap out of a helicopter in 2002 during Afghanistan's celebration of the 10-year anniversary of the departure of

the Communist regime. Her jump was symbolic of life in post-Taliban Afghanistan: unleashing the long-suppressed talents of Afghan women.

At a November Georgetown University Symposium titled "Advancing Afghan Women," Secretary of State John Kerry said Afghan women are at the forefront of the security transition. The brigadier and the other women in the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) are part of what he called "the future that we are now watching Afghan women build."

While the plight of women in Afghanistan has improved since 2001, immense challenges remain, even for those in the ANSF. Violence against women, including workplace harassment, remains rampant. In 2009 and 2013, the ministries of the Interior and Defense opened "gender offices" to identify challenges and work to overcome them.

The Afghan government views recruitment of women into the ANSF, especially the Afghan National Police (ANP), as a key step to redress the trend of violence against women. The Ministry of the Interior, which oversees the ANP, sees having female police officers as the best way to combat forced marriages, honor killings, physical and emotional abuse, and other forms of domestic violence. With the encouragement of the international community, it released its first Gender Strategy for managing and recruiting female police.

The staff of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul and personnel in the field work with Afghan officials to implement their mandates and hold the Afghan government accountable for fulfilling its pledge to integrate and protect women within the security sector. Frank discussions with the security ministries on gender integration and professional development have led to Afghan initiatives to support women in uniform. Embassy support and confidence-building among female leaders in uniform have empowered women in the Afghan military. These women include a helicopter pilot who had to hide her aviation skills under the Taliban and a lawyer who serves at the Gender and Human Rights Directorate of the Ministry of Defense (MOD). The embassy amplifies their voices within the MOD and beyond.



Afghan and American soldiers discuss overcoming challenges in the military at a professional development event co-hosted by U.S. Embassy Kabul.
State Department photo

The United States also assists female Afghan police and soldiers by supporting training programs, conducting awareness campaigns targeting men and holding roundtable discussions that promote dialogue across ethnic boundaries. In January, more than 20 female police graduated from Ministry of the Interior training. A USAID gender officer and her military counterparts helped establish the first formal training for policewomen, in Kandahar, a culturally conservative province and the birthplace of the Taliban. They did so by engaging with local male leaders. One trainee told local media: "I am a woman, and I will serve my country and people in the ranks of the national police until my last breath."

ANSF leadership hopes to introduce more women into its ranks, but women serving in the ANSF are at immense risk for abuse. A female lieutenant colonel in the police lamented, "When I first joined I was so proud to wear a uniform and serve my country. Over the years I started wearing normal clothes to work because the harassment by strangers in Kabul, my community and other officers was too much to bear."

Her situation is typical of the contradictions for women in the Afghan work force after the Taliban. She is working on her graduate degree at a private university and rose in the ranks to lieutenant colonel, yet cultural norms are slow to change. The closing of Provincial Reconstruction Teams last year and ongoing military transition has left some women increasingly worried about personal security. Nonetheless, women are committed to social change.

"Even though my convoy and personal security detail were attacked by a suicide bomber, I remain a fighter," a female government official said, holding back tears. She credited the U.S. military's focus on gender issues for providing her with the confidence to engage women in districts and villages on the rights of women and girls.

Afghanistan is not alone in facing the challenge of gender integration in the security forces, and U.S. diplomats and female military officers share stories with Afghan women of the struggles that were involved in racial and gender integration of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Since last summer, the embassy has facilitated three gatherings of junior female Afghan and U.S. officers to generate a dialogue. One female U.S. sailor told the Afghan female soldiers that American women "encounter inequality in [their] jobs as well, and that solutions included banding together as women to help strengthen arguments for fair treatment, helping each other make sure we meet the same standards as men and believing that even though the perception is that these assignments were originally for men, women are just as capable."

Afghan officers at each embassy-hosted seminar said the dialogues have helped break down ethnic and cultural divisions and identify new opportunities that come with generational and cultural shifts. Enduring support from the U.S. Embassy and international community encourages young officers to develop a nationalist, not ethnic, mindset, and a unified women's voice. □



Above: A Department of State Political Military Affairs officer meets with Afghan Army officers; **Below:** Afghan and American soldiers gather at a professional development event; **Below left:** Staff from the post's Political Military Affairs and Public Affairs sections meet with Ministry of Defense Deputy for Gender and Human Rights and Brigadier General Khatool, second from left, a former paratrooper and sole female general in the Afghan Army.

State Department photos





Photo by Fabrizio Sciamani

Lost and Unknown

ACS repatriates long-missing woman

By Stephanie Van Hoff Moniot, vice consul, U.S. Consulate General in Tijuana, Mexico

Tijuana, Mexico, is the ultimate border town: With a population of between 1.5 and 2 million residents, and with 300,000 people crossing in and out from the United States every single day, it's easy to come here anonymously. Every year, millions of U.S. citizens do just that. There's no record of their arrivals, as no passports were required to enter, nor visas or IDs.

Some who come seeking a weekend of tequila-fueled fun wake up in "TJ" without even knowing how they got here.

It's no wonder, then, that Consulate General Tijuana's American Citizen Services (ACS) Special Citizen Services (SCS) section is the busiest in the world. The most extreme human dramas regularly unfold in SCS. Besides its Locally Employed (LE) Staff, there's a dedicated officer just for deaths, another for arrests and another for welfare and whereabouts cases, which average more than 1,000 a year and involve everything from kidnappings to disasters to missing persons.

One recent case unfolded during first-tour officer Kevin Brosnahan's rotation as the Welfare and Whereabouts Officer.

It began in July, when a concerned U.S. citizen called ACS Tijuana requesting assistance with a mentally ill woman who looked American and had been living on TJ's streets for years. The caller, a church volunteer, said the church had provided shelter for the woman but did not know her name or anything else about her except that she spoke hardly any Spanish. She did not even know who she was.

As their first step, Brosnahan and the ACS

staff brainstormed ways to try to identify this "Jane Doe." Although she could not communicate her identity verbally, they wondered if she could provide visual clues and whether her fingerprints might lead to a record of her. Brosnahan asked the legal experts in Overseas Citizen Services (OCS/L) for permission to fingerprint and photograph the homeless woman. Permission was granted and the post was authorized to provide the fingerprints to law enforcement.

A few days later, Brosnahan visited the woman at a Tijuana halfway house. She was skittish and frail. She was not able to tell him her name or write it or provide much other information about her identity and citizenship. He asked where she was born, and she said Paris, France. But when Brosnahan showed her a U.S. map and asked her to point to her hometown, she pointed directly to Colorado. He started asking more questions, and at one point the woman mentioned "Stapleton Air Freight," an indication that perhaps she had lived or worked near Denver's former airport, which closed in 1995. The woman was reluctant at first, but Brosnahan convinced her to agree to be photographed, and although not able to follow all the instructions, she agreed to be fingerprinted as well.

Energized, Brosnahan searched NamUs, the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System website. He scoured dozens of profiles of people who had disappeared. Finally, he found a potential photo match—a woman missing from Colorado since 2005.

Years in the Tijuana sun had taken a toll on

the homeless woman, but it sent chills down the spine of the ACS chief when Brosnahan showed her the current picture of the Jane Doe beside a photo from the NamUs profile. She also thought it was a match.

Brosnahan called the Colorado Springs Police Department and reached the detective assigned to the cold case. Not only did the detective remember the case, he was still in contact with the family. He had sifted through thousands of leads that had all gone nowhere but remained determined to solve the mystery before his approaching retirement.

Brosnahan emailed the detective the photos and a scan of the fingerprints. Two hours later, Brosnahan got the call: The prints matched. The woman's name was Sara. (Her real name cannot be revealed for privacy reasons). She had served in the U.S. Navy and had been lost for more than eight years.

Sara's parents were celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary, and the family happened to be all together in Arizona when they got the news. Brosnahan gave them the halfway house's phone number and set up a conference call.

The call was short. Family members got to say hello and tell Sara they loved her, but Sara has multiple mental illnesses, including bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, and these may have made her reluctant to talk. Heartbreakingly, she told the callers that she had no family. Later, the halfway house staff reported that Sara had teared up when she heard her family's voices.

Brosnahan and LE Staff visited Sara again, but she did not recognize her own name



or any information about her family. The family sent photos for the halfway house to show her, but she seemed not to recognize them. Clearly, this wasn't the happy reunion ACS staff had imagined, but there was still hope for getting Sara home.

Sara's family, while elated, was cautious about what her return would mean for her and them. Many years earlier, Sara had gone missing for a couple of weeks and then rejected their help when found. Sara's sister took the lead coordinating her return to the United States. Because of Sara's fragile mental state, simply transporting her to the port of entry was not an option. So, ACS had to coordinate her return through the busiest land border crossing in the world into appropriate temporary care in California and, ultimately, home to Colorado.

Nick Tyner, who took over the welfare and whereabouts portfolio when Brosnahan rotated out of ACS, worked with the family and began meeting with a group of stakeholders, including staff from a mental health facility in Colorado, congressional staff and hospitals in San Diego, just across the border. ACS staff and the family worked to find a mental health facility in California that would accept her, with the plan of eventually transferring her to a facility in Colorado. The family got Sara's Social Security and disability benefits reinstated, and her sister pursued temporary guardianship, to be able to direct her care in the United States.

The post gathered her citizenship documents so that she could be admitted into the United States. They collected her birth certificate, Navy discharge papers, medical documents and the fingerprint verification of her identity, and coordinated with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) so that she could be transferred across the border. Staffers persuaded the Mexican Cruz Red Cross to provide free ambulance transportation to the port of entry.

The crossing, set for Sept. 24, was threatened with delay when the doctor from the receiving San Diego mental health organization, who was coming to Mexico to accompany Sara across the border, had to cancel. Rather than postpone the transfer, ACS improvised: Instead of



Clockwise from upper left: From left, Cindy Rodriguez, Nick Tyner and Edgar Zamudio are ACS staff who helped identify the American who was in distress in Mexico. *Photo by Stephanie Moniot*; Vendors ply their goods in a sea of traffic near to the border checkpoint for entry from Mexico into the United States. *Photo by Punxsutawneyphil*; Sara's fingerprints, when she was a "Jane Doe." *Photo by Stephanie Moniot*

the San Diego facility's psychiatrist doing an assessment in Mexico, Tyner and LE Staffers would evaluate Sara at the halfway house and allow the ambulance to transport her only if she was calm and cooperative. They could not compel her to travel.

Sara, with encouragement from Tyner and the shelter director, willingly boarded the ambulance. The CBP documented her citizenship at the border, then she boarded a U.S. ambulance and was taken to a California facility. Later, her family brought her to a facility in Colorado. She has made good progress since and can now read, write and talk.

The family had their first Thanksgiving together in eight years. Sara requested a pumpkin pie. After all these years, she is finally back home.

For Brosnan, Tyner and the CG Tijuana team, it was the type of case that makes ACS work so remarkable. After long years of wondering, Sara's family now knows she is safe and getting the professional care she needs. □





Representatives from the U.S. Mission to the U.N. Agencies in Rome join counterparts from 194 nations to review ideas for ending hunger and malnutrition at the Committee for Global Food Security meeting in October 2013.

Photo by Alessia Pierdomenico

Fighting Hunger

USUN Rome addresses major world need

By Sharon Ketchum, public affairs officer,
U.S. Mission to the U.N. Agencies in Rome

The stakes couldn't be higher: One out of every eight people in the world goes to bed hungry each night, and 16,000 children die daily from hunger-related causes, 80 just in the time it takes to read this article. Preventing hunger is a moral imperative, U.S. foreign policy priority and world security issue.

To help address the challenges of hunger and malnutrition, the U.S. Mission to the U.N. Agencies in Rome (USUN Rome), a team of 25 employees from the Department of State, USAID and the Department of Agriculture (USDA), "works as one mission to find solutions to hunger," said USUN Rome Ambassador David J. Lane. "We represent a wide range of U.S. government entities and the American people to colleagues from 194 United Nations member countries. The intense negotiations that our mission engages in every day are rewarded each time member countries agree on a strategy that helps the world's poor improve their lives and successfully feed themselves and their families."

The United States is the largest contributor to all three U.N. food and agriculture agencies: the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP) and International Fund for Agricultural Development. Last year, the United States contributed more than \$6.5 billion to support humanitarian assistance and development aid for agriculture, food security and nutrition. U.S. assistance both helps the most vulnerable people and sustains initiatives to look beyond emergencies to build more resilient societies. If U.S. and international support ends when news coverage ends, those affected may lack the tools for long-term recovery and will likely need emergency aid again.

USUN Rome supports efforts to make food more healthful, safer and more nutritious; encourages open exchange of data about food and agriculture markets; and facilitates joint research initiatives and projects between the U.N. food and agriculture agencies and experts from the U.S. government and academia. "The USDA team at USUN is uniquely positioned to offer a vast network of experts to share American knowledge and know-how," noted George Douvelis, acting USDA agriculture counselor. "We have brought agronomists, nutritionists, trade experts and food safety experts to Rome, often on short notice, to help member countries and the U.N. agencies develop more effective approaches to ending hunger."

Rome has long played a special role in agriculture, food security and nutrition, but it is fast becoming the global center for these issues. Since the 2008 global food price crisis, the U.N. Committee on World Food Security (CFS), which is co-hosted by the U.N. Agencies in Rome, has served as a global platform for information on food security and nutrition policies worldwide. Annual CFS meetings now bring together around 700 people from member states, civil society and the private sector to discuss and recommend responses to the most pressing challenges countries face in ensuring their people have adequate nutritious food.

Political Officer Greg Groth was in Rome in 2012 when the CFS Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition was finalized. "After months of difficult negotiations," he recalled, "participants rose from their chairs and applauded. Global leaders who disagree on many issues congratulated one another on a product that strengthens food and nutrition security in the world.

"That energy and sense of common purpose continues today," he added, "and we regularly find ourselves collaborating with non-traditional partners in the fight to end global hunger."

In addition to supporting administration policy objectives at such major U.N. events, USUN Rome provides critical information to shape that policy. Ambassador Lane visits programs in the field, speaking with humanitarian assistance professionals, government officials and farmers. On trips to Africa and Asia, he has seen the most promising approaches and advised U.S. agency partners on what is working and what could be improved. He is often accompanied by journalists, who raise awareness about U.S. and U.N. efforts to eliminate hunger.



Mission staff put this knowledge to use when representing the United States on the governing bodies of the U.N.'s multibillion-dollar Rome-based agencies. "One of our most important roles is to ensure that each agency is governed well, chooses projects thoughtfully, spends its money wisely and evaluates results so the agency can keep operating better," said Deputy Chief of Mission Natalie E. Brown. "We were particularly pleased when FAO unveiled its 2014 budget and plan of work. Member-state activism and careful FAO planning resulted in administrative efficiencies and greater transparency while further strengthening high-quality programs for agricultural and rural economic development—all at the 2013 funding level."

Empowering women and girls is another U.S. priority. "It is rewarding to see WFP implement reforms in their approach to gender issues that the U.S. Mission has long advocated," said USAID Humanitarian Program Specialist Hang Nguyen. "By assessing the impact of programs on both men and women, we not only empower women globally but also make these programs—and U.S. contributions—more effective."



Ambassador Lane serves food to students at Wat Run Primary School.

Photo by Sharon Ketchum



Above: Cambodian children line up for a nutritious meal at Wat Run Primary School; Below: Political Officer Stetson Sanders speaks about the work of USUN Rome to local high school students. Photos by Maria Paola Pierini



Ambassador Lane talks with villagers from Chantheavy Khieu, Cambodia, about their newly formed micro finance group.

Photo by Sharon Ketchum

With WFP programs reaching more than 90 million people each year, changes to its gender policies will have far-reaching impact.

Although ending hunger is the mission's ultimate goal, its achievement requires U.S. engagement on issues beyond food and agriculture programming. According to Political Officer Stetson Sanders, "without a fair and functional legal framework, the poorest people are often left behind as a country develops economically."

Sanders, therefore, supports the collaboration of UNIDROIT, an international legal organization, with other U.N. agencies to prepare new legal guides, including a model for promoting commercial partnerships between farmers and agro-business companies to benefit both small- and large-scale partners. He also works with the International Development Law Organization to help ensure that women working in agriculture have the same legal protections as men, and with ICCROM, whose cultural preservation projects have saved historically significant structures and trained young people in their preservation.

When the goal of adequate, safe food is met, USUN Rome will stand with its many partners and applaud, proud of having helped in this key global effort. □

It's a Hit



Hill Harper, left, and TLG President Stacy D. Williams are all smiles following Harper's speech.

Photo by Robert Stewart

Actor Emphasizes Critical Thinking

On Feb. 20, award-winning actor and best-selling author Hill Harper was the keynote speaker during the Department's National African American History Month Program. The event, co-hosted by the Thursday Luncheon Group (TLG) and the Office of Civil Rights, drew nearly 500 participants to the Loy Henderson Auditorium.

Harper's topic, "Equipping the Next Generation for Leadership and Success," focused on the importance of using one's energy and passion to bring about positive change. He said his time at Harvard Law School, where he befriended fellow student Barack Obama, reinforced the value of critical thinking as a way to break down complex problems and create innovative solutions. He also underscored the need to act bravely.

Harper said he'd participated in youth outreach programs, with the help of U.S. posts, in Italy, Israel, the West Bank and Austria through the Bureau of International Information Programs' U.S. Speakers program. Follow TLG on Twitter: @TheTLG1973.

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Telework Week a Hit

The benefits of telework include supporting employees' emergency preparedness; keeping the federal government operating in an emergency; reducing traffic, emissions and commuting costs; assisting with work/life balancing; and increasing productivity. To encourage agencies, organizations and individuals to participate, the Mobile Work Exchange sponsored its fourth annual Telework Week, March 3-7.

Under Secretary for Management Patrick Kennedy invited all eligible Department teleworkers to participate and encouraged managers to permit at least one day of telework for situational teleworkers, those who telework infrequently. Participants were encouraged to register and enter their commuting data into a Mobile Work Exchange website. On the week's first day, the federal government allowed unscheduled telework due to a snow-storm, and participants proved the government could continue operations despite the weather.

For the week, 209 State Department employees pledged to telework, thus saving \$8,662 (\$433,061 on an annual basis) and reducing pollutants by 4.6 tons (240 tons annually). During the entire week, Global OpenNet reported 6,374 users.



Embassy Promotes Soccer Match

When civil unrest in March forced teams of American and Ukrainian soccer players to move their match at the last moment from Ukraine to Larnaca, Cyprus, the staff of the U.S. Embassy in Nicosia was ready to help.

The March 5 match was crucial for the U.S. players, who play professional soccer for a variety of European teams and were being considered to represent the United States in this summer's World Cup in Brazil. They had only a small window of time to come together, play a match and be evaluated by American coaches. So when playing in Ukraine became untenable, Cyprus became the venue, and the U.S. team arrived with several ESPN camera crews in tow.

The Embassy understood that the images from the match would have resonance beyond the sports pages. U.S. Ambassador to Cyprus John Koenig met privately with Ukrainian Ambassador Borys Humeniuk to discuss the situation in the Ukraine, and then Ambassador Koenig and his wife, Natalie, sat beside Humeniuk and his wife at the match.

The U.S. team was cheered on by American undergraduates studying at the University of Nicosia, but the Ukrainians won 2-0.

The embassy shared photos of the event with colleagues in Kyiv and, via social media, sent them far and wide, receiving a strong and positive reaction.

Ukrainian Ambassador to Cyprus Borys Humeniuk, left, chats with Ambassador John Koenig at the soccer match. At right is Koenig's wife, Natalie.

Photo by Costas Hadjielias

Retirements

Foreign Service

Betso, Kathleen A.
Clark, Mary K.
Durham, Mary Ann B.
Fortney, Edward E.
Livingston, Jeanette M.

Civil Service

Ranzino, Georgeanne F.
Shaw, Donald C.
Snider, Joyce E.
Taylor, Noel B.
Teague, Robert J.

Altman, Nancy J.
Friedman, Hal J.
Guidera, James T.
Hoard, Iris A.
Hunter, Jo-Ann L.

Kazanowski, Eileen F.
Lester, Raymond
Nash, Ardenia R.
Seawright, Stephanie Evette
Taylor, Montez D.

Ethics Answers

Q: Our office director recently emailed everyone in the office about a race her husband is running to raise money for a local animal shelter. The email asked recipients to click on a link to make a contribution. I'd rather not donate but feel uncomfortable saying no to my supervisor. What should I do?

A: Ethics rules prohibit personally soliciting funds or other support from a subordinate. In addition, barring a few narrow exceptions that do not apply here, employees cannot solicit for charitable causes in the workplace, other than for the Combined Federal Campaign. Federal employees should not use government resources such as computers, email or office space to further private fundraising efforts. Even during the Combined Federal Campaign, employees should not pressure colleagues for donations. You may speak directly with your supervisor about these rules or ask your executive office to handle the matter.

Ethics Answers presents hypothetical ethical scenarios Department employees might face. For help with real ethics questions, email ethicsattorneymailbox@state.gov.

Appointments



Max Sieben Baucus of Montana is the new U.S. Ambassador to the People's Republic of China. Previously, he was the senior U.S. senator from Montana. He was chairman of the Committee on Finance, in which role he led the passage of free-trade agreements with 11 countries. He was vice chairman of the Joint Committee on Taxation and served on several other committees. Before his election to the Senate in 1978, he served in the U.S. House of Representatives and Montana House of Representatives.

Anthony L. Gardner of New York is the new U.S. Representative to the European Union, with the rank of Ambassador. Previously, he was managing director at Palamon Capital Partners, a private equity firm based in London. Before that, he held high-level corporate and legal positions in London, Paris, New York and Brussels. As director for European Affairs on the National Security Council in 1994-95, he worked closely with the U.S. Mission to the EU on the New Transatlantic Agenda.

Rose E. Gottemoeller of Virginia is the new Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security. Previously, she was acting under secretary and assistant secretary for the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance. She was chief negotiator of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with the Russian Federation. Before joining the Department, she was a senior associate with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and held high-level positions in the Department of Energy.

Michael A. Hammer (SFS) of the District of Columbia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Chile. Previously, he was assistant secretary for Public Affairs, and before that acting assistant secretary and principal deputy assistant secretary for PA. He was senior director for Press and Communications and spokesman at the National Security Council, and also served as director of Andean Affairs at the NSC. Other postings include Bolivia, Norway, Iceland and Denmark.

Richard Stengel of New York is the new Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy. Previously, he was managing editor of *TIME* magazine. Before that, he was president and CEO of the National Constitution Center and a professor of journalism at Princeton University. He worked with Nelson Mandela on Mandela's autobiography and served as associate producer of the Oscar-nominated documentary "Mandela." He received an Emmy award for another documentary, "Beyond 9/11: Portraits of Resilience."

Check out our online magazine to watch a video message from featured ambassadors.

Lying in State



Safety Scene

BY Certified Industrial Hygienist Kate Bradford,
Office of Safety, Health and Environmental Management

Don't Be Shocked

Practice electrical safety at home

Most people probably use electric lights, appliances and other machines without giving much thought to their home's electrical system. They give even less thought to the fatal consequences of an ungrounded or improperly wired home.

In 2011, an estimated 47,700 home fires reported to U.S. fire departments involved some type of electrical failure or malfunction as a factor contributing to ignition. These fires resulted in 418 deaths, 1,570 injuries and \$1.4 billion in property damage. The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that nearly 400 people are killed annually by electrocution in the United States and that 70 percent of child-related electrical accidents occur at home. More than 30,000 non-fatal shock accidents occur each year in homes.

U.S. electrical codes require homes to be electrically grounded and have other electrical safety features. Overseas, Department residences undergo a residential safety inspection to verify electrical grounding and other safety requirements. But electrical dangers still lurk.

Electricity always seeks to return to its source and complete a continuous circuit. A typical circuit in a U.S. home has two conducting wires: hot and neutral. Electricity travels from the service panel to appliances through the hot wire and returns the current to the service panel through the neutral wire. A third "grounding" wire is also connected to every outlet in a U.S. home. This critical safety feature is designed to greatly reduce your chance of shock or electrocution.

Grounding wires are connected directly to the earth through a metal grounding rod. Should a short circuit or an overload occur, leaking electrical current will find its way along the grounding wire to "earth."

The home's service panel, which distributes electricity to switches, outlets and appliances, is usually found in the basement, garage or utility area. When a short or overload shuts down power to a circuit, the service panel is where you can restore the flow or turn off power to a circuit before starting a project or repair. Circuit breakers or fuses shut off electricity to the circuit if the demand for power is more than the circuit is designed to carry. This prevents fire from overheated wires, most of which are within walls where no one will notice a hot or melting wire.

Electrical outlets are where you are most likely to interact with your home's electrical system. In the United States, most homes have polarized outlets that feature two vertical slots of different sizes. The slot for the neutral wire is wider than the slot for the hot wire, making it difficult to insert an electrical plug the wrong way. When used with a polarized plug, these outlets provide protection by keeping electrical current directed. Polarized outlets may not be available in other parts of the world, however, so it's

important to understand the potential for reversed polarity and learn how to plug the hot conductor wire on a plug into the hot outlet receptacle.

Grounded outlets are required in U.S. homes. The electrical outlet's receptacle for the plug has a round hole for the grounding conductor pin from the appliance's plug. The grounding pin is connected to a ground wire.

Some 2,400 children yearly receive severe shock and burns from inserting items into outlet receptacles. A few die. Tamper resistant receptacles (TRRs), which look like standard wall outlets but have an internal shutter mechanism, prevent children from sticking objects like hairpins, keys and paperclips into the receptacle. The spring-loaded shutter system opens only when equal pressure is applied simultaneously to both shutters, such as when an electrical plug is inserted.

Never touch anything electrical if you are wet or standing in water—you may become part of a path for leaking current and suffer severe shock or electrocution. Electrical current on most

outlet receptacles is rated at between 12,000 and 20,000 milliamperes (mA). For an adult, a current as low as 10 mA can prevent you from letting go, and 100 mA can stop your heart. For children it takes less current. No energized electrical wire is safe to touch unless it is well insulated.

Since the 1970s, Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) have come into wider use, saving thousands of lives and helping cut the number of home electrocutions in half. GFCIs are electrical safety devices that trip electrical circuits when they detect ground faults or leakage currents. These outlets quickly shut off power to the circuit if the electricity flowing into the circuit differs by even a slight amount from that returning. A GFCI should be used in any area where water may come into contact with electrical products. The National Electrical Code

requires them for kitchens, bathrooms, garages and outdoors, or where outlet receptacles are within six feet of a water source. Use the test and reset buttons on GFCIs monthly to confirm they are working properly. Many small appliances such as hair dryers now come equipped with a GFCI in the plug.

Something is amiss if touching an appliance causes a shock or tingling sensation. The appliance or home may not be properly grounded, or there could be an electrical short circuit. Call your landlord or a licensed electrician immediately. At post, call facilities management.

Know and understand how your home's electrical system works. If you notice tell tale signs like shocks, lack of GFCIs or circuits that routinely trip, don't let them go unaddressed. The life you save may be your own. □



Obituaries



Jerome R. Broadus, 85, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Jan. 22. He lived in Silver Spring, Md. He served in the Army before joining the U.S. Information Agency's Office of Audit in 1963. He traveled to about 100 countries before retiring in 1982. Later, he worked as an auditor for the State Department Federal Credit Union, USIA's Office of the Inspector General and other organizations. He consulted for the Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy and was active in his church and condo association.



Katie E. Call, 92, wife of retired Foreign Service officer John P. Call, died Feb. 4 in Solana Beach, Calif. She served with the Marines in San Francisco during World War II. After a brief tour as secretary in the Vienna Legation in 1948, she accompanied her husband on postings to Paris, Cairo, Panama City, Buenos Aires, Asunción, Cotonou, Canberra and Libreville. She loved golf and bridge, and was an expert at both games.



Kay Marie Flynn, 70, a retired Foreign Service secretary, died Dec. 14 from complications of pancreatitis. She lived in Alexandria, Va. She worked for the federal government in Minneapolis before moving to Washington, D.C., where she became a roving secretary for the Department, working in embassies around the world. She retired in 1995. She loved all animals and wildlife, especially her cats.



Leona Marti, 91, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Feb. 22 in Taylorsville, Utah. She joined the Foreign Service in 1951 and served in Hamburg, Manila (twice), Havana, Luxembourg, Moscow, Bangkok and Jakarta. She retired in 1979 to the Salt Lake City area. She enjoyed spending time with family, traveling and attending the theater, ballet and symphony. She did volunteer work with refugees and the Traveler's Aid Society.



Charles Donald "Don" Matthias, 87, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Dec. 31 in Gig Harbor, Wash. He served in the Army during World War II. His career with USAID and its predecessors began in 1952. He served in Jordan, Iran, Somalia, Vietnam, Bolivia, Pakistan and Chile. After retiring in 1981, he settled in Gig Harbor, where he enjoyed boating in the San Juan and Canadian Gulf islands.



Roger Charles Schrader, 84, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Feb. 4 in Escondido, Calif., due to complications in surgery. He served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. During his 30-year career, he was posted to New Zealand, Switzerland, Germany and England. He retired in 1987 to Tucson, Ariz., where he was active in Common Cause, the Social Action Council and the Tucson Committee on Foreign Relations. He enjoyed reading, writing letters to the editor and debating politics.



Gerald Sutton, 78, a retired Foreign Service and Civil Service officer, died Feb. 12 in Las Vegas, Nev. His postings included Spain, Jamaica, Colombia, Cuba, Japan, Nicaragua and Ecuador, where he was chargé d'affaires. As a senior inspector in the Office of the Inspector General, he visited more than 110 countries. After retiring in 1998, he moved to Las Vegas. He was an avid fan of the Washington Redskins and Los Angeles Lakers and Dodgers, and a collector of modern and folk art.



Jane Prout White, 91, widow of retired Foreign Service officer Robert W. White, died Feb. 8 in Kilmarnock, Va. She lived in Alexandria, Va. She worked for the Department of Agriculture and White House, and accompanied her husband on postings to Paris, Havana, Bangkok, Tokyo, Prague, Frankfurt, Beirut, Canberra and Panama City. After retirement, they traveled extensively and enjoyed their family and grandchildren.



Robert James Wilson, 90, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Feb. 20 in Gaithersburg, Md. He served in World War II and entered the Foreign Service in 1948. His postings included Rome, Belgrade, Hong Kong, Luxembourg, Berlin, Algiers, Lagos, La Paz, Kabul, Lima and Mexico City. He retired in 1984 to Manassas, Va., and moved to Gaithersburg in 2004. He enjoyed following the Washington Redskins and New York Giants football teams, and loved big band music.

Questions concerning employee deaths should be directed to the Office of Casualty Assistance at (202) 736-4302. Inquiries concerning deaths of retired employees should be directed to the Office of Retirement at (202) 261-8960. For specific questions on submitting an obituary, please contact Bill Palmer at palmerur2@state.gov or (202) 203-7114. □

End State



Mexico

A festival-goer dons an ornate costume while participating in a parade for La Fiesta de San Miguel in Guanajuato, Mexico.

Photo by Alejandro Cueva



Barbados

Speedboat passengers enjoy an evening cruise under a golden sunset off the western coast of Barbados.

Photo by Greg McMullin





Kenya

A woman walks along a rust-colored dirt road in Tsavo East National Park, one of the oldest and largest parks in Kenya.

Photo by Tiberio Frascari



South Korea

A man wearing a traditional uniform participates in the change of guard ceremony at Deoksugung Palace in Seoul.

Photo by Christian Senger



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